

(323) 881-2401

February 6, 2003

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**HEARING ON RECOMMENDED FEE INCREASE FOR THE JUNIOR
LIFEGUARD PROGRAM (ALL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)**

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD, ACTING AS THE GOVERNING BODY
OF THE CONSOLIDATED FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, AFTER THE PUBLIC
HEARING:**

1. Approve a \$73 increase to the Junior Lifeguard Program fee from \$267 to \$340.
2. Find that the purpose of this increase is to meet increased operational expenses of the Program.

PURPOSE OF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

In June 1978, your Board directed that the Junior Lifeguard Program be self-sustaining through fees paid by participants. Since then, the program fees have been increased several times to ensure compliance with this policy. Therefore, we are recommending a fee increase to fully recover direct program costs for uniforms, program equipment, and instructor salaries and employee benefits.

JUSTIFICATION:

The proposed Junior Lifeguard Program fee reflects a complete accounting of direct employee costs (salary and employee benefits), clothing, and equipment costs. The fee reflects increased direct costs for the program exclusive of overhead. Overhead has traditionally been absorbed by the District and the General Fund on a pro rata basis, and we are recommending the continuation of this practice, which has been approved by your Board in the past. The fee methodology has been reviewed and approved by the Auditor-Controller.

Given the benefits of teaching safety skills to our youth, the program's proposed fee balances the need for cost recovery with the desire to maximize participation. There were a total of 2360 paid participants in the summer of 2002 and we are estimating that 2500 participants will be attracted to the expanded six-week program in the summer of 2003. The total program costs will be approximately \$850,000.

A \$73 fee increase allows us to maintain the most cost-effective program, for a program of its size, as surveyed along the California Coastline. Programs in Newport Beach cost participants \$440-\$520 for 8 weeks; San Diego, \$300 for 4 weeks; and Seal Beach, \$370 for 6.5 weeks.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING:

None. Direct program costs are fully offset by fees paid by the participants.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

The Junior Lifeguard Program has been conducted by the County of Los Angeles for 42 years. The program teaches beach safety and physical fitness for six weeks each summer to boys and girls from 9 to 17 years of age. Each participant in the program receives a swimsuit or trunks, a Junior Lifeguard logo T-shirt, and three issues of "American Lifeguard."

A full-time Ocean Lifeguard Specialist, one seasonal Ocean Lifeguard Specialist, four seasonal supervisors, two student workers, and sixty instructors (Ocean Lifeguards) comprise the program's staff. This staff instructs Junior Lifeguards in ocean lifesaving, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid, ocean safety, and ocean and beach sports. In addition to improved personal ocean proficiency and health, the program's Cadet Corps has provided additional training and growth for veteran Junior Lifeguards to become professional lifeguards as well as to pursue other career opportunities related to the marine environment.

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The entry fees to the United States Lifesaving Association Regional and National Competitions will be provided to all Junior Lifeguard competitors, and special recognition awards are presented to the most improved and most valuable Junior Lifeguard in each morning and afternoon group. The Taplin Relay, which is the final competition event of the program, provides awards and specially-made hats to each team member on the top three teams in each of the age groups.

The only requirement for participation in the program is the ability to swim. Concerted efforts are made to attract youth from minority groups and from areas outside the coastal communities. Financial aid funded by program fees, in addition to community donations, will continue to ensure qualified youth can participate in the program regardless of their ability to pay.

The proposed fee increase is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not constitute a "project" subject to the act (Guidelines, Section 15061, Subd. (b) (1)).

This request for approval of the increased fee will be made after all public notification and hearing requirements as specified in Section 6062a Section 66018 of the Government Code are complied with.

INCREASE IN PROGRAM SERVICES:

The 2001 and 2002 Junior Lifeguard Programs' attendance was the largest in four decades. After realizing a 26% gain in participation from 1998 to 2002, the program's goals are to maintain safety and quality as well as to broaden the diversity of its participants. The program's outreach goals have traveled well beyond the coastal communities, providing education on ocean safety and information regarding the Junior Lifeguard Program.

The Junior Lifeguard Outreach Program continues to focus on three areas:

1. The inclusion of program sites that include beaches which are more accessible to non-beach area residents. Cabrillo, Santa Monica, El Segundo, and Venice beaches all have freeway access, reducing transportation time.
2. The outreach and dissemination of program information through the Fire Department's Public Education Program.

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3. Maintaining a cooperative effort with the Department of Beaches and Harbors W.A.T.E.R. (Water, Awareness, Training, Education, and Recreation) Program.

PUBLIC EDUCATION:

This year's Public Education Program (Fiscal Year 2002/2003) will visit over 90 schools throughout the County of Los Angeles, providing education and information to over 50,000 students. In addition, the program will continue to participate in school career and safety events, Safety Service Fairs, and expositions in conjunction with other County entities.

FEE INCREASE FACTORS:

There are several factors concerning the Junior Lifeguard Program fee increase:

1. Despite overall increases in participants and ensuing staff and equipment needs, the Junior Lifeguard Program fee has remained at \$267 for the years 1998 through 2002 (five years).
2. In order to replace outdated and worn equipment, the Services and Supplies budget for the program has been increased from \$120,000 to \$145,000 to provide the equipment necessary to safely accommodate the growing number of participants.
3. To facilitate a 26% growth to nearly 2400 participants since 1998, the Ocean Lifeguard Specialist position for the Junior Lifeguard Program has been budgeted for twelve months, an increase from nine months.
4. An additional Ocean Lifeguard Specialist is utilized as Assistant Program Director to ensure adequate supervision of instructors and participant safety.
5. The program was reduced last year from 6 to 5 weeks to maintain the current \$267 fee. There has been a great deal of parental interest in returning the program to 6 weeks, which would require a fee increase.

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FINANCIAL AID :

Financial aid awards are allocated to qualifying participants based on family income and number per household, regardless of District affiliation. Therefore, the financial aid budget for the 2003 Junior Lifeguard Program has been projected to be \$40,000, an increase from the \$25,378 utilized by participating families in 2002. This 38% increase will accommodate the participating families' increased program costs.

ON-GOING CONTRACTING PROCESS:

Not applicable

CONCLUSION:

1. Upon approval, please instruct the Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board to transmit two (2) signed originals and one (1) executed copy of the Board letter to the Fire Department.

Respectfully submitted,

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN

PMF:MF:kd

Attachment

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
 County Counsel
 Auditor-Controller
 Chief Administrative Officer
 Director, Beaches and Harbors